

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 IO-14 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 EB-11 FEA-02 SCI-06

DRC-01 /177 W

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R 212105Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9330

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 12371

BEIRUT PASS DAMASCUS AND BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, XF

SUBJECT: GISCARD AND FRENCH POLICY TOWARD ARAB-ISRAELI  
DISPUTE

REF: PARIS 9134 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AS IN OTHER AREAS OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY, WE  
ANTICIPATE UNDER GISCARD A CHANGE MORE OF TONE THAN OF  
SUBSTANCE IN FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS THE ARAB STATES AND  
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ISRAEL. END SUMMARY

1. THE LEGACY OF GAULLIST-POMPIDOLEAN FOREIGN POLICY (WHICH PUBLIC OPINION POLLS INDICATE 63 OF THE FRENCH ELECTORATE APPROVE) INCLUDES AS ONE OF ITS KEY ELEMENTS GAINING RECOGNITION BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY OF FRANCE AS AN INFLUENTIAL POWER IN THE NEAR EAST, A REGION WHERE THE FRENCH PERCEIVE THEY HAVE IMPORTANT NATIONAL INTERESTS. THE ENERGY CRISIS AND FRENCH DEPENDENCE ON ARAB OIL HAVE SERVED TO DEEPEN FRENCH CONCERN ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF FRANCE'S MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS.

2. EARLY IN HIS CAMPAIGN GISCARD SAID LITTLE ABOUT ISRAEL OR THE ARABS, AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT--LIKE OTHER FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS--NEVER BECAME A CAMPAIGN ISSUE. THE ARABS AND THEIR CLOSEST FRIENDS IN FRANCE LOOKED UPON CHABAN AS THEIR CHAMPION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE AND WERE DISAPPOINTED BY HIS SHOWING. MITTERRAND'S REPUTED PRO-ISRAELI SENTIMENTS COMMENDED HIM TO ISRAELI SYMPATHIZERS IN FRANCE BUT THEY WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THE POSSIBLE EFFECT ON THE SOCIALIST LEADER OF HIS PARTY'S ALIGNMENT WITH THE COMMUNISTS. MOST OBSERVERS FELT THAT GISCARD FELL SOMEWHERE BETWEEN CHABAN AND MITTERRAND IN NEAR EASTERN ORIENTATION.

3. LATE IN THE CAMPAIGN, IN RESPONSE TO A JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY QUESTION, GISCARD SAID: "FRANCE REMAINS ATTACHED TO THE LETTER OF RESOLUTION 242, IT BEING UNDERSTOOD THAT THE STATE OF ISRAEL OUGHT NO LONGER TO BE SUBJECT TO THE GEOGRAPHIC VULNERABILITIES THAT IT HAS KNOWN TOO LONG. CERTAIN CLAIMS OF ITS ADVERSARIES ARE LEGITIMATE; NO LESS SO IS ISRAEL'S DESIRE NOT TO EXPOSE ITSELF AGAIN TO A WEAKENING SETTLEMENT OF ITS BORDERS. IF I AM ELECTED PRESIDENT, FRANCO-ISRAELI RELATIONS WILL FIND AGAIN A CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE AND CLARITY INDISPENSABLE TO ALL INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE. I WOULD ADD, FOR MY PART, THE SENTIMENT OF RESPECT ("CONSIDERATION") WHICH I HAVE NEVER CEASED TO FEEL FOR THIS YOUNG STATE".

4. THIS WARMER TONE TAKEN TOWARDS ISRAEL IN THE HEAT OF  
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A CAMPAIGN WHERE EVERY VOTE COUNTED REFLECTED BOTH GISCARD'S JUDGMENT OF HIS ELECTORAL REQUIREMENTS, HIS GENERAL PRACTICE TO USE LESS ABRASIVE LANGUAGE THAN DID FRENCH OFFICIALS DURING THE LAST MONTHS OF THE POMPIDOU REGIME AND THE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S PROBABLE INCLINATION TO BE MORE OPEN TO ISRAEL THAN ARE MOST GAULLIST DIE-HARDS AND QUAI OFFICIALS. (AT ABOUT THE SAME DATE, EVEN FONMIN JOBERT STRUCK A MORE EVEN-HANDED NOTE ON THE

MIDDLE EAST (SEE REFTEL)). WE DO NOT THINK, HOWEVER, THAT GISCARD IS SIGNIFICANTLY LESS COMMITTED THAN MOST OF FRENCH OFFICIALDOM TO THE PERCEPTION THAT FRENCH NATIONAL INTERESTS REQUIRE THE CONTINUATION OF FRANCE'S CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES. INTIMATE FRANCO-ARAB TIES ARE PERCEIVED AS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO SECURE ARAB OIL (ABOUT 80 OF FRENCH OIL NEEDS), TO ENLARGE THE MARKET FOR FRENCH EXPORTS, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE VITAL ARMS INDUSTRY, AND TO SECURE FOR FRANCE THE IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH HISTORY, FRENCH PRETENSIONS

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TO EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP AND FRENCH PRESTIGE DEMAND.

5. CONSEQUENTLY, THE FRENCH CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO SOUND THEIR FAVORITE THEMES ON THE MIDDLE EAST, ALBEIT IN A SOMEWHAT LESS STRIDENT MANNER THAN HAS BEEN THEIR RECENT PRACTICE. THESE INCLUDE: SUPPORT FOR RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 (AS INTERPRETED BY THE FRENCH); WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL (WITHOUT ANY CONCOMMITANT READINESS TO ADD SUBSTANCE TO THE EXPRESSION); RESERVATIONS ABOUT ACHIEVING A "PIECEMEAL" CONFIDENTIAL

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SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST; THE NECESSITY FOR INTERNATIONAL (READ FRENCH AND EUROPEAN) PARTICIPATION IN ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT; THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTLING THE PALESTINIAN (NATIONAL) PROBLEM AND OF FINDING AN ACCEPTABLE "INTERNATIONAL" STATUTE FOR JERUSALEM. BOTH GISCARD AND HIS NEW FOREIGN MINISTER WILL INFLUENCE THE EXPRESSION OF THESE IDEAS TO A DEGREE, THUS, PERHAPS, DILUTING THEM SOMEWHAT. BUT THESE VIEWS ARE STRONGLY HELD BY QUAI OFFICIALS WHO UNDER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, AS IN THE RECENT PAST, WILL PROBABLY REMAIN THE MAJOR ARCHITECTS OF FRENCH POLICY IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. IRWIN

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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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US Department of State  
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30 JUN 2005

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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, FR, XF, IS, (GISCARD D'ESTAING, VALERY)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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